

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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JUSTICE ISSUE: PEACE

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE/ LECTIONARY WEEK:	Isaiah 2:1-5
SOCIAL PRINCIPLES/ BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS REFERENCES:	¶163 The Political Community: Government Responsibilities: F
OBJECTIVE:	Students will explore Isaiah 2:1-5 to understand God’s vision of peace and justice, connecting it to the theme of hope in the first week of Advent.
SUPPLIES NEEDED:	Bibles, The 2020/2024 Social Principles, Donkey Poster, Tails for the donkey per student, popsicle sticks, glue/tape, construction paper, markers, and other craft supplies.

LESSON PLAN STRUCTURE (1 HOUR)

CENTERING MOMENT (5 MINUTES)

Say: “Before we start, let’s share how our week was! We’ll go around the circle, and each person can pick one word or a short sentence.”

Say: “Something good that happened...”

(Allow the students to share a word/short sentence to complete the sentence. Please let the students know that they also have the option to pass.)

Say: “Something that was hard...”

(Allow the students to share a word/short sentence to complete the sentence. Please let the students know that they also have the option to pass.)

Say: “Something I want to pray about...”

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(Allow the students to share a word/short sentence to complete the sentence. Please let the students know that they also have the option to pass.)

Say: “Thank you for sharing. God cares about all of it – the good, the hard, and the prayers.”

Ask for a volunteer to pray, or the leader can offer a short prayer, including the prayer concerns lifted during the sharing time.

SCRIPTURE STUDY (25 MIN.)

Say: “Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is the season in the church year when we get ready for Christmas. What are some things that you and your family do to get ready for Christmas?”

(Pause for responses)

Say: “Thank you for sharing how your family prepares- it sounds like there are similarities and also unique things that we do in our families to prepare. In the church, Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Jesus. We prepare our hearts and make room for Jesus in our lives through prayer, kindness, and worship. Advent lasts for four weeks before Christmas, and each week has a specific focus. The first week, this week, the focus is on hope.”

(Provide Bibles for the students)

Say: “Today’s passage comes from Isaiah 2:1-5. Let’s take turns reading a verse each.”

Read: Isaiah 2:1-5.

Say: “Reflect on what is going on in our world today. Isaiah describes a time when nations will come together in peace. What do you think that would look like in today’s world? How does that give us hope?”

(Pause for discussion)

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Say: “The Social Principles (§163 The Political Community: Government Responsibilities: F) says, *The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice.* What does it mean to deplore war? Why do you think the church takes a strong stance against violence?

(Pause for discussion)

Say: “Verse 4 says people will ‘beat their swords into plowshares.’ What do you think that means? How can we turn hurtful things into helpful things in our own lives?

(Pause for discussion)

Say: The Social Principles say that “we yearn for the day when there will be no more war.” What gives you hope that God’s vision of peace can become real?

(Pause for discussion)

Say: “Advent is a season of waiting and hoping for Jesus. How is the kind of hope Isaiah talks about similar to the hope that we have during this season of Advent?”

(Pause for discussion)

Say: “Isaiah talks about walking “in the light of the Lord,” what does walking in God’s light look like for you? How might that bring hope to others around you? Those who are struggling?

GROUP ACTIVITY (25 MIN.)

There are two activities provided. Choose one or both!

Group Activity One (Pin the Tail on the Donkey)

Supplies Needed: Donkey poster and paper tails (one for each student), Blindfold

Directions on “Pin the Tail on the Donkey”

1. Put up the donkey picture on one wall of the classroom.
2. Give each player a tail with tape on the back.

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3. One student at a time, cover their eyes with a blindfold and spin them gently in a circle.
4. Let them try to stick the tail on the donkey.
5. Take turns so everyone gets a chance.

Play “Pin the Tail on the Donkey”

Reflection Questions:

1. Our scripture passage for today emphasized the vision of God’s house, where all people come together and live in peace. How is following God’s vision like trying to pin the tail while blindfolded?
2. How can hope guide us when we can’t see the full plan?

Group Activity Two

Supplies: Lots of popsicle sticks, glue/tape, construction paper/ markers, optional: stickers, washi tape, other decorations

Directions:

In small groups or in pairs, consider the “house of God/church” that is described in Isaiah 2:1-5. Use the supplies available and build a church that is reflected in the passage. Provide 10 minutes for the small groups/pairs to build this church.

As they build, invite them to think about the following:

- What kind of church would people from “all nations” feel welcome in?
- What makes God’s house a place of peace and hope?
- Is the church accessible for all?
- Is the church environmentally friendly?

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CLOSING MOMENT (5 MIN)

Say: “Isaiah imagines a time when all nations will come to God’s house, and swords will be turned into tools for growing life. It’s full of hope, peace, and unity. The hymn “Be Thou My Vision” is a hymn that reminds us to let God guide our eyes, hearts, and minds. Just like in Isaiah, we can trust God to show us the way toward hope and peace, even when we can’t see the full path yet.”

Optional: Play the hymn “Be Thou My Vision” - *Kings Return (A cappella Hymn)*
(https://youtu.be/e5Hy_eRmjgo?si=_OnSWeyJ9Y4KWN6L)

Say: “As we finish, let’s stand together and close with a prayer.”

Conclude with a prayer.